

# Neighborhood Planning and Sub Area Plan

## Description

Neighborhood and Sub Area Plans are similar in that they establish specific goals for smaller focused areas. They are functional plans that are a step more detailed than the comprehensive plan. Although both plans focus on smaller land areas than the overall comprehensive plan, there are key differences between them. Neighborhood plans tend to focus on residential and some local commercial development that serves primarily the residents on the neighborhood. Sub-area plans may address somewhat larger geographic areas that include individual neighborhoods as they relate to contextual land uses and other surrounding districts.

## Sub Area Plan

The comprehensive plan, which is the plan for an entire city, county, or township, provides the framework for conducting sub-area, or detailed planning. This type of plan may also be referred to as a “community plan” or a “refinement plan”. Sub-area plans can include plans for urban and rural sub-areas, neighborhoods, corridors, redevelopment areas, economic development areas, waterfront development, and activity centers. Much like a comprehensive plan, sub-area plans can include goals, objectives, action steps, and a future land use map. A sub-area plan is an element of the comprehensive plan, and can address neighborhoods, infill areas, brownfields, corridor development, annexation, design standards, and target densities on a smaller scale than the original comprehensive plan. Sub-area plans should be consistent with other elements of the comprehensive plan.

The sub-area planning process allows for more specific planning based on the individual needs of areas. For some issues it is more plausible to undertake a project at the sub-area level rather than as a larger-scale effort. As with the comprehensive plans, public meetings that are intended to gather input and to improve communication channels with concerned residents as to the quality of life within their neighborhoods, are essential for desired outcomes, effectiveness, and implementation.

## Neighborhood Plan

Neighborhoods are smaller elements and basis of the overall community. They are constantly changing with various unique social and economic characteristics. Neighborhood plans can be utilized to plan for the many influences and changes of an area.

Neighborhood residents can work with planners to take a leading role in the development and future of their area. Many positive outcomes can be generated by a neighborhood plan, including the ability to improve or maintain the appearance or character, housing, sense of community, safety, or services in their area. Resources can also be focused toward the specific needs of the individual neighborhood such as commercial uses, transportation, or recreation opportunities.

The neighborhood planning process typically includes developing a vision with input from a variety of stakeholder groups, such as neighborhood residents, governmental officials, community organizations and other stakeholders. A neighborhood plan typically contains a set of strategies to maintain or improve designated areas that relate to the different uses such as residential, commercial, etc.. Other important aspects of the plan include identifying boundaries of the neighborhoods and analyzing the social, economic, safety, housing, and demographic characteristics of the area.

## Relevant Statutes

- IC 36-7-4 - Local Planning and Zoning
- IC 36-7-14 - Redevelopment of Areas Needing Redevelopment Generally; Redevelopment Commissions
- IC 36-7-21 - Special Improvement Districts for Redevelopment of Blighted Areas
- IC 36-7-22 - Economic Improvement Districts

# Neighborhood Planning and Sub Area Plan

## Capacity Recommendations

- A comprehensive plan should already be in place to provide broader context for neighborhood and sub area plans.
- As the detail of the plan increases, a higher level of planning capacity is needed which can be accomplished through additional professional planning staff or consultant expertise.

## Guidelines / Considerations for Implementation

- Limited effectiveness if plan is not followed up with implementation
- Need public input throughout entire process
- May be difficult to achieve consensus
- May need staff or consultant services to create sub-area plan
- Each sub-area plan should be consistent with other comprehensive plan elements.

## Example Ordinances

No example studies are available for this tool.

## Example Studies

- **University-Village Area Development Plan – Muncie, IN:** The University-Village Area Development Plan is one of the first sub-area action plans resulting from the 1999 Delaware-Muncie Metropolitan Comprehensive Plan. This plan comes at an opportune time when Ball State University is contemplating an expansion into the neighborhood, local business owners are reinvesting in the area, and student housing preferences are changing. [\[http://www.co.delaware.in.us/Departments/PlanCommission2/Projects/BSUVillage/university-village area development plan 3b.pdf\]](http://www.co.delaware.in.us/Departments/PlanCommission2/Projects/BSUVillage/university-village area development plan 3b.pdf)
- **Lower Town Neighborhood Plan – Paducah, KY:** For decades Lower Town, a neighborhood adjacent to downtown Paducah, Kentucky, remained dilapidated. In 2002, after extensive neighborhood participation, Paducah's City Commission adopted a plan to redevelop the blighted areas through aggressive code enforcement, flexible zoning techniques and protection of historical design. An historical mixed-use zone was established so business and residential uses could occur in the same area, much as they did at the turn of the 20th century. Today, property values continue to rise and the neighborhood's image is changing. This project was awarded an American Planning Association Outstanding Planning Award for a Special Community Initiative. [\[http://paducahky.gov/city/planning/special\\_projects/documents/LTpdfPlan.pdf\]](http://paducahky.gov/city/planning/special_projects/documents/LTpdfPlan.pdf)
- **South Madison Neighborhood Plan – Madison, WI:** This plan offers guidance for change in the South Madison Neighborhood. Strong emphasis is placed on catering change, but not at the expense of long-time residents and businesses. The plan addresses strategies on how to bring about new development that will enhance yet preserve residential areas, revitalize commercial districts, and improve parks and open spaces. [\[http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/planning/ndp/southmadison\\_plan.pdf\]](http://www.ci.madison.wi.us/planning/ndp/southmadison_plan.pdf)

## Helpful References and Links

- **Indiana Planning Association's Citizen Planner's Guide - Part 7 Comprehensive Plans:** This publication is part of a series published by the Indiana Planning Association. Its intended purpose is for training citizen planners, including planning commission members, board of zoning appeals members, neighborhood organizations, and citizen committees. The guide addresses why communities plan, what is in a plan, how the planning process works, how to evaluate a plan, and how the plan is adopted. [\[http://www.indianapanning.org/Citizen/7\\_ComprehensivePlan\\_2005.pdf\]](http://www.indianapanning.org/Citizen/7_ComprehensivePlan_2005.pdf)

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- **APA – 1996 Neighborhood Collaborative Planning Symposium:** This web page provides links to various working papers prepared for the symposium as well as a project bibliography. [\[http://www.planning.org/casey/1996casey.html\]](http://www.planning.org/casey/1996casey.html)
- **Neighborhood Planning.org:** The Neighborhood Planning web site is solely an educational effort. It is intended to assist those interested in better understanding neighborhoods and what might be done to plan, preserve, and improve them. Information is provided through a list of eleven topics and model neighborhood plans. [\[http://www.neighborhoodplanning.org/index.htm\]](http://www.neighborhoodplanning.org/index.htm)

## Helpful Contacts

- **Community Based Projects (CBP)** – Ball State's premiere outreach and service program since 1969 specializing in a variety of small town issues.

Community Based Projects  
College of Architecture and Planning  
Ball State University  
Muncie, IN 47306  
cbp@bsu.edu  
<http://www.bsu.edu/cbp/>

- **Center for Urban Policy and the Environment** – As part of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI, this organization can assist in a variety of planning related matters.

334 N. Senate Avenue,  
Suite 300  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Tel: 317-261-3000  
Fax: 317-261-3050  
urbanctr@iupui.edu  
<http://www.urbancenter.iupui.edu/AboutTheCenter/>

- **Purdue Cooperative Extension Service: Community Development Division**

Sam Cordes  
Purdue University  
1201 West State Street  
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2057

Phone: 765-494-7273  
Toll Free: 877-882-PCRD (7273)  
Fax: 765-494-9870  
smcordes@purdue.edu

## Neighborhood Planning and Sub Area Plan

- **American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service:** This service, provided by the American Planning Association, is intended to help communities obtain information about different planning topics and to answer planning questions. Communities may subscribe to the service or seek assistance on an as-needed basis. The service utilizes a vast amount of resources to answer any question and provide information such as sample ordinances, reports, etc.

Contact:

American Planning Association  
Planning Advisory Service  
122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600  
Chicago, IL 60603  
Phone: 312-431-9100  
Fax: 312-431-9985  
[pas@planning.org](mailto:pas@planning.org)

- **Indiana Planning Association List of Consultants** – This resource lists numerous private consulting firms that offer planning services. Some of the most common tasks performed by consultants are the formation of comprehensive plans, corridor studies, zoning ordinances, and other development plans and regulations. However, the resource is only available to Indiana Planning Association members.

Indiana Planning Association  
PO Box 44804  
Indianapolis, IN 46244  
(317) 767-7780  
<http://www.indianaplanning.com>

### Other Possible Funding Sources

- **Planning Grants:** planning grants funded with Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are administered by the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA). The goal of the program is to encourage communities to plan for long-term community development. Community Leaders can apply for projects relating to such issues as infrastructure, downtown revitalization, and community facilities. To be competitive, projects must demonstrate:
  - The area to be served has a substantial low- and moderate-income population (51% or greater) or is designated a slum or blighted area by local resolution.
  - They meet a goal of the Federal Act
  - The particular planning initiative addresses established long-term community priorities
  - The funds granted will have a significant impact on the overall project
  - The community has a strong commitment to the project; and
  - The project is ready to proceed upon the grant being awarded and will be completed within 12 months (source: Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs <http://www.in.gov/ocra/index.html>)

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Community Affairs Director  
(317) 232-1703  
[kweissenberger@ocra.in.gov](mailto:kweissenberger@ocra.in.gov)

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- **Other HUD Funds:** Other Community Development Block Grants are available to communities of 50,000 or more citizens or communities designated as entitlement communities. Information can be obtained from:

HUD Indianapolis Field Office  
151 N. Delaware Street  
Suite 1200  
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2526  
(317)226-6303 ext. 6790  
robert\_f.\_poffenberger@hud.gov  
<http://www.in.gov/ocra/index.html>

### Program Objectives and Issues Addressed

- Growth management
- Vision or direction for future growth or development/redevelopment
- Support for neighborhood decisions or proposed changes in an area
- Justification for requests for funds or services
- Citizen involvement
- Land use and zoning conflicts
- Transportation network issues
- Safety improvements
- Neighborhood character and appearance
- Infill areas
- Brownfields
- Corridor development
- Annexation
- Design standards
- Economic development
- Employment
- Special uses (airports, environmentally-sensitive areas, etc.)
- Utilities and Infrastructure
- Historic resources and structures

### See Also

- Comprehensive Plan
- Planned Unit Developments
- Land Use Plan
- Downtown/ Main Street Plan